



JASPER COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES

*Jasper County Clementa C. Pinckney Government Building
358 Third Avenue – Courthouse Square – Post Office Box 150
Ridgeland, South Carolina 29936 - 843-717-3680 – Fax: 843-726-7996*

Nicole Holt, PSHRA-CP
Human Resources Director

nholt@jaspercountysc.gov

February 6, 2025

Stephen Baske
Jasper County Fire-Rescue

Dear Stephen,

Jasper County has received Chief Wells' recommendation for termination, and the purpose of this letter is to inform you of your termination effective as of today's date, February 6, 2025. Your termination is based on the following infractions that were in violation of the Jasper County Policies and Procedures:

- Section 1 and Section 15.C.u

Be advised, that due to your termination for cause, you are ineligible for rehire. Your health insurance benefits will end on February 28, 2025. Be advised that all other Jasper County benefits will expire effective today, January 6, 2025. As stipulated under COBRA, should you wish to continue your health insurance coverage, you may do so. A COBRA Notice of Election form will be mailed to you under separate cover. A copy of the Jasper County Grievance Policy, Section 16A, page 82, of the Jasper County Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual is enclosed for your review.

Please contact Chief Vaughn to coordinate the return of all county equipment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Holt".

Nicole Holt
Human Resources Director

CC: Andrew P. Fulghum, County Administrator
Chief Russell Wells, Emergency Services Director

*An Equal Opportunity Employer
Special Accommodations Available Upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities*

16. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**16.A DEFINITION/PURPOSE**

A grievance is defined as a complaint by an employee that he or she has been treated unlawfully or in violation of County policies with regard to matters pertaining to his employment by the County. This definition includes, but is not limited to, discharge, suspension, involuntary transfer, promotion, and demotion. An employee's level of compensation or classification is not the proper subject for a grievance except as it applies to alleged inequities within an agency or department of the County. However, if an employee believes that he or she has not received or been credited with or has otherwise lost wages or benefits to which he or she is entitled, his or her grievance is to be presented in accordance with this procedure or such wages or benefits may be forfeited.

16.B PROCEDUREGeneral

This procedure is adopted in accordance with the County and Municipal Employees Grievance Procedure Act, Section 8-17-110, *et seq.*, Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

An employee who feels that he or she has a grievance follows the following procedures:

Step 1. He or she discusses the grievance with his or her immediate supervisor within ten (10) calendar days of the event(s) giving rise to the grievance. If his or her supervisor is unable or unwilling to adjust the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee proceeds to Step 2.

Step 2. The employee is to follow the chain of command in his or her department, appealing to each successive level of supervision. All Step 1 and Step 2 appeals may be oral. At each level each supervisor has four (4) calendar days to render a decision. If no decision is made within this time, the grievance is considered denied. If a supervisor at a particular level is unavailable to consider the grievance, it is considered denied, and the employee is to appeal to the next level of supervision.

Step 3.

- a) If the head of the department in which the employee is employed denies the grievance, this decision is final as to any grievance brought by a probationary employee. A new employee is considered probationary until his or her probationary evaluation is completed and approved by his or her department head.
- b) Employees other than probationary employees may appeal the denial of their grievances by department heads to the Employee Grievance Committee by filing a written request for

appeal with the County's Human Resources Department. This must be done within seven (7) calendar days of the department head's denial of the grievance. The written request for appeal is expected to include the following information:

- (1) The purpose of the appeal and what recommendation is requested of the Grievance Committee; and
- (2) Statement that the chain-of-command has been followed in the appeal process as is required by the grievance procedure.

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the employee's request, the Chairperson of the Employee Grievance Committee schedules the requested hearing and notifies the Employee Grievance Committee, the employee requesting the hearing, the affected department, and the Human Resources Department.

16.C EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

The County Administrator is authorized to appoint a Committee composed of five (5) members to serve staggered terms of office of three (3) years; two of the terms will expire each year. The Administrator may also appoint two (2) alternates who may serve when a member is not available. A member will continue to serve after the expiration of his or her term until a successor is appointed. Any interim appointment to fill a vacancy prior to the completion of a member's term will be for the unexpired term. Any member may be reappointed for succeeding terms at the discretion of the County Administrator. Members of the Committee employed in the same department as the grieving employee and members who have formed an opinion on the issues prior to the hearing may not participate.

The Employee Grievance Committee annually elects its own Chairperson from among its members. The Chairperson will serve as the presiding officer at all hearings that he or she attends but may designate some other member to serve as presiding officer in his or her absence. The Chairperson will have the responsibility to schedule and to re-schedule all hearings.

16.D GRIEVANCE HEARING

The Chairperson will have control over the proceedings. In order to have a Grievance Hearing, there must be a quorum of four (4) members. The Chairperson will take whatever action is necessary to ensure an equitable, orderly, and expeditious hearing. Parties will abide by the Chairperson's decisions, except when a Committee member objects to a decision to accept or reject evidence, in which case the majority vote of the Committee will govern.

The Committee has the authority to call for files, records, and papers that are pertinent to any hearing; to call for or consider affidavits of witnesses; to request and hear the testimony of witnesses, to consider the results of polygraph examinations; and to secure the services of a recording secretary at its discretion. The Committee has no authority to subpoena witnesses, documents, or other evidence, nor will any County employee be compelled to attend any hearing. All proceedings are tape recorded. Witnesses, other than the grieving employee and

the department representative, are sequestered when not testifying. All witnesses testify under oath.

All hearings will be conducted in executive session unless the grieving employee requests, at the beginning of the hearing, that the hearing be held in open session. The official tape recording and the official minutes of all hearings are subject to the control and disposition of the Employee Grievance Committee.

Neither the grieving employee nor the department head may be assisted by advisers or by attorneys during the hearing itself. However, the Committee may have an attorney available to it at any and all times it considers necessary. The County Administrator's designee will provide assistance in reading written materials to the Committee at the request of a grieving employee.

In disciplinary actions by Department Heads and their subordinate supervisors, the employee must receive in reasonable detail written notice of the nature of the acts or omissions that are the basis for the disciplinary action. This notice may be amended at any time twenty-four (24) hours or more before the commencement of the hearing. The Department Head must demonstrate that the disciplinary action is for the good of the County. The Department Head will make the first presentation.

In non-disciplinary grievance hearings, the employee must establish that a right existed and that it was denied him or her illegally or in violation of County policy. The employee will make the first presentation.

In all grievances, the grieving employee and the Department Head will each be limited to one (1) hour of initial presentation. The party required to make the first presentation will be entitled to a ten (10) minute rebuttal of the other party's presentation. The Chairperson will appoint himself or herself or another member of the Committee as timekeeper.

The Committee may base its findings and recommendations on any additional or different grounds developed from the presentations.

In all grievances, presentations may be oral, or in writing, or both and may be supported by affidavits or un-sworn signed statements from witnesses, by records, other documentary evidence, photographs, and other physical evidence. Presentations will be made by the grieving employee (with reading assistance from another if the employee desires) and by the Department Head of the affected department. Parties may request that the Committee call witnesses. A list of potential witnesses should be submitted to the Committee five (5) days prior to the hearing. However, neither party may call witnesses, question the other party, or question any witnesses called by the Committee.

16.E FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee will make its findings and recommendation and will report such findings and recommendation to the County Administrator within twenty (20) days after the hearing.

16.F COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR PROCEDURE

Except as provided below, the Committee, within twenty (20) days after hearing an appeal, will make its findings and recommendation(s) and report such findings and recommendation(s) to the County Administrator. If the County Administrator approves the recommendation of the

Committee, copies of the decision are transmitted to the employee and to the head of the particular department involved. If, however, the County Administrator rejects the recommendation(s) of the Committee, the County Administrator will make his or her own decision without further a hearing, and that decision is final. Copies of the decision are transmitted to the employee and to the head of the particular department involved.

In grievances involving the failure to promote or transfer or the discipline or discharge of personnel employed in or seeking assignment to departments under the direction of an elected official or an official appointed by an authority outside county government, the Committee, within twenty (20) days after hearing an appeal, will make its findings and recommendation(s) and report such findings and recommendation(s) to such official. If the official approves the recommendation(s) of the Committee, a copy of the decision is transmitted to the employee. If, however, the official rejects the recommendation(s) of the Committee, the official will make his or her own decision without a further hearing, and that decision is final. A copy of the decision is transmitted to the employee.

REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK
